

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Minutes

September 28, 2026
District Office Board Room

1. Call to Order

School Board Chair Claudia Gonzalez-George called the regular meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District No. 659 to order at 6:00 p.m. Present: Butler, Epstein, Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Miller, and Quinnell. Absent: Nelson. This meeting was open to the public, live-streamed and recorded, and access to the recording was posted on the school district website.

2. Agenda Approval/Table File

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the board unanimously approved the agenda.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Announcements and Recognitions

- Congratulations to Northfield High School students Kaia Markofski, Elizabeth McCormick, and Jack Peterson, who have been named Commended Students in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program. Commended Students are recognized for placing in the top 50,000 of over 1.5 million students nationwide who took the 2026 preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/MNSQT).
- Congratulations to the 2026 Northfield High School Athletics Hall of Fame Inductees: Bailey DuPay (Class of 2015), Kevin Sevcik (Class of 1975), Brandi Harkonen (Class of 1989), Shaun Murphy (Class of 1997), Adam Murphy (Class of 1996), Andrew Scofield (Class of 2013), and Coach Jorge Zuccolotto. The inductees will be recognized at halftime during the homecoming football game on Friday, October 2, and at the induction ceremony on Saturday, October 3.
- On September 24, Superintendent Anderson had the opportunity to address St. Olaf during their dedication of the Svoboda Center for Civic Engagement. The center nurtures the passion of St. Olaf students for public service and builds their capacity to engage in their communities through Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) courses, internships, volunteering, and research opportunities. Northfield Public Schools has been fortunate to be one of more than 50 local organizations who have benefited from the Center's work to connect St. Olaf students with opportunities to learn and serve.
- Superintendent Anderson addressed the board remotely this evening from the Minnesota Association of Fall Administrators (MASA) Fall Conference, where he attended a number of sessions, including the MASA Great Start Cohort for new superintendents, and presented in conjunction with Susan Brott from CESO Communications regarding "Clarity as a Strategy."
- Superintendent Anderson provided activities highlights from the past week: The girls tennis team defeated both Faribault and Mankato West, 7-0; the Raider volleyball team defeated Rochester Century, Eden Prairie, Jefferson, and Chaska, but lost to Apple Valley; the girls soccer team defeated both Austin and Jordan, and tied with Winona 0-0; the boys soccer team tied with Winona 0-0 and lost to Austin; the girls swim and dive team defeated Faribault 98-54 on Thursday; both the girls and boys cross country teams competed in Eden Prairie on Saturday, with the girls team placing second and the boys team placing 20th; the Raider football team defeated Rochester Mayo 18-12 on Friday night, and looks forward to hosting New Prague this week for homecoming.
- It is homecoming week at Northfield Public Schools. Board members and attendees are encouraged to attend one of many home games and events happening this week. All events are listed on the activities calendar linked on the home page of the district website.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- a. Spring Creek Elementary School Improvement Showcase. Spring Creek Elementary Principal Rich Torres provided the board with an overview of the school's successes and highlights in 2025-2026 and the focus areas for the 2026-2027 school year.

- b. Bridgewater Elementary School Improvement Showcase. Bridgewater Elementary Principal Ashley Benhart provided the board with an overview of the school's successes and highlights in 2025-2026 and the focus areas for the 2026-2027 school year.

6. Consent Agenda

On a motion by Butler, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously approved the consent agenda.

- a. Minutes. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on September 14, 2026.
- b. Gift Agreements. Gift agreements included in the board packet.
- c. Financial Reports.
 - i. Financial Reports - May 2026. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf requested the board approve paid bills totaling \$2,197,134.64, payroll checks totaling \$3,903,955.77, a wire transfer totaling \$350,000.00 from Frandsen General to Frandsen Sweep, a wire transfer totaling \$150,000.00 from Frandsen Sweep to Frandsen General, and the financial reports for May 2026. No bond payments were made. At the end of May 2026, total cash and investments amounted to \$75,508,112.05.
 - ii. Financial Reports - June 2026. Director of Finance Mertesdorf requested the board approve paid bills totaling \$1,838,741.22, payroll checks totaling \$3,827,455.82, a wire transfer totaling \$200,000.00 from Frandsen General to Frandsen Sweep, a wire transfer totaling \$50,000.00 from Frandsen Sweep to Frandsen General, and the financial reports for June 2026. No bond payments were made. At the end of June 2026, total cash and investments amounted to \$80,880,069.92.
- d. Personnel Items.
 - i. Appointments
 - 1. Kahlil Brown, Community School Site Assistant for up to 10 hrs/week at the Middle School beginning 9/21/2026-5/13/2027. Step 2, \$19.95/hr.
 - 2. Larisa Dominguez Martinez, .5 FTE Assistant Gymnastics Coach at the High School beginning 11/16/2026. \$2,595.50 stipend.
 - 3. Daniel Hurlbert, Event Worker at the Middle School beginning 9/16/2026. \$45/event.
 - 4. Alyxia Lyons, Recreation & Aquatics Lead for Community Education/Recreation beginning 9/14/2026-5/31/2027. Step 4, \$17.25/hr.
 - 5. Margot Nelson, Community School Site Assistant for up to 10 hrs/week at the Middle School/Bridgewater beginning 9/21/2026-5/13/2027. Step 1, \$19.27/hr.
 - 6. Allison Staples, Community School Club Leader for up to 10 hrs/week at Bridgewater beginning 9/21/2026-5/13/2027. Step 1, \$20.92/hr.
 - 7. Kari Christensen, .568 FTE Early Childhood Special Education Teacher at the NCEC beginning 9/28/2026. MA, Step 10.
 - 8. Tazio Dennison, Recreation and Aquatics Assistant for Community Education/Recreation beginning 9/12/2026-5/31/2027. Step 1, \$15.32/hr.
 - 9. Dale Fredrickson, Event Worker at the Middle School beginning 9/3/2026. \$45/event.
 - 10. Ana Guerrero, Community School Club Leader for up to 10 hrs/week at Spring Creek beginning 9/22/2026-10/31/2026. Step 1, \$20.92/hr.
 - 11. Kaija Halvorson, Community School Site Assistant for up to 10 hrs/week at Bridgewater beginning 9/25/2026-5/13/2027. Step 2, \$19.95/hr.
 - 12. Ingrid Nycklemoe, 1.0 FTE LTS Early Childhood Teacher at the NCEC beginning approximately 10/1/2026-12/22/2026. MA, Step 5.
 - 13. Asia Shrestha, Community School Site Assistant for up to 10 hrs/week at Spring Creek beginning 9/25/2026-5/13/2027. Step 1, \$19.27/hr.
 - ii. Increase/Decrease/Changes in Assignment
 - 1. Isabel Dagban-Ayivon, Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation, add Instructor Lead effective 9/14/2026-5/31/2027. Step 1, \$16.42/hr.
 - 2. Heather Guertin, Teacher at Spring Creek, add MTSS Building Facilitator for up to 25 hrs/year effective 9/14/2026-6/11/2027. \$1,000 stipend.
 - 3. Christine Howard, 1.0 FTE Speech & Language Pathologist at Greenvale Park, change to .8 FTE Speech & Language Pathologist at Greenvale Park and .2 FTE at St. Dominic effective 9/15/2026.
 - 4. Andrea James, Special Ed EA/PCA at the NCEC, change to General Ed EA for 24 hrs/week effective 9/8/2026.
 - 5. Bailey Krueger, .8 FTE Speech & Language Pathologist at Bridgewater and .2 FTE at St. Dominic, change to 1.0 FTE Speech & Language Pathologist at Bridgewater effective 9/15/2026.
 - 6. Shelly Kruger, Special Ed EA/PCA for 6.5 hrs/day at the High School, add .5 hrs/day supervisory effective 9/8/2026.

7. Sarah Marohl, Special Ed EA/PCA for 1 hr/day, Gen Ed Supervisory EA for 1.5 hrs/day, and .5 hrs/day Nurse Coverage, add an additional 1 hr/day as Gen Ed Supervisory EA effective 9/7/2026-6/11/2027.
 8. Courtney Olukiran, Special Ed Instruction & Inclusion Coach for the District, add Special Education Mentor effective 9/1/2026-6/10/2027. \$2,500 stipend.
 9. Jessica Tietz, Special Ed EA/PCA for 9.75 hrs/week at the NCEC, add Hand in Hand General Ed EA for 9 hrs/week effective 9/7/2026.
 10. Laura Kay Allen, LTS Special Education Teacher at the High School, change assignment end date to 9/29/2026.
 11. Wren Becker, Special Ed EA/PCA for 6.75 hrs/day at Bridgewater, change to 6 hrs/day effective 9/7/2026.
 12. Nicole Drexler, Teacher at Spring Creek, add Community School Licensed Teacher Sub for up to 10 hrs/week effective 9/28/2026-5/13/2027. \$40/hr.
 13. Brittany Ellerbusch, Teacher on a leave of absence at Greenvale Park, add up to 15 hours of coaching effective 9/30/2026-6/11/2027. \$40/hr.
 14. Noah Gagnon, Science Teacher at the High School, add a ½th overload for 1.5 hrs/week effective 9/21/2026-6/11/2027. \$84.68/hr.
 15. Bethany Jensen, EA at the Middle School, add Special Ed EA/PCA - Extracurricular and Nonacademic Support for up to 2 hrs/day effective 9/8/2026-10/14/2026.
 16. Melanie Klein, Special Education Teacher at Spring Creek, add Homebound Instruction Teacher for up to 8 hrs/day for the District effective 9/8/2026-6/10/2027. Lane/step.
 17. Joshua Mogren, Community School Site Assistant at Greenvale Park, add Community School Club Leader as needed effective 9/23/2026-5/13/2027. Step 2, \$21.35/hr.
 18. Kim Norton, Special Ed EA/PCA for 6.75 hrs/day at Spring Creek, change to Special Ed EA/PCA for 6.75 hrs/day at the Middle School effective 9/23/2026.
 19. Elga Reyes De Broughton, EA at Spring Creek, add Community School Site Assistant for up to 5 hrs/week at Spring Creek effective 9/21/2026-5/31/2027. Step 4, \$21.34/hr.
 20. John Schiel, .80 FTE Phy. Ed Teacher at Greenvale Park and .12 FTE DAPE Teacher at Spring Creek, change to .75 FTE Phy. Ed Teacher at Greenvale Park, .05 FTE DAPE Teacher at Greenvale Park, and .12 FTE DAPE Teacher at Spring Creek effective 8/27/2026.
 21. Kyle Schmidt, General Ed EA for 21.5 hrs/week at the NCEC, change to 22 hrs/week effective 9/8/2026.
 22. Jillian Specht, 1.0 FTE Phy. Ed Teacher at Greenvale Park, change to .90 FTE Phy. Ed Teacher & .10 FTE DAPE Teacher at Greenvale Park effective 9/27/2026.
 23. Heather Stanton Ims, School Social Worker at the Middle School, add Community School Licensed Teacher for up to 10 hrs/week effective 9/28/2026-5/13/2027. \$40/hr.
 24. Nancy Veverka, ABE Teacher for 2.25 hrs/week at the NCEC, add an additional 1-2 days/week; 2-3 hrs/day, over the course of 10-12 sessions effective 10/1/2026-6/30/2027.
 25. Isaac Wagner, EA at Bridgewater, add Community School Club Leader and Community School Site Assistant as needed at Bridgewater/Greenvale Park effective 9/21/2026-10/31/2026. Step 1, \$19.27/hr.
 26. Sarah Wolfe, ECFE EA for 15.5 hrs/week at the NCEC, change to 17.25 hrs/week effective 9/23/2026.
- iii. Leave of Absences
1. Jill Bohlen, Educational Assistant at Greenvale Park, FMLA leave of absence beginning 11/17/2026 and continuing through 1/1/2027.
 2. Inger Hanson, Teacher at the ALC/Middle School, FMLA leave of absence beginning 10/19/2026 and continuing on an intermittent basis for up to 60 work days.
 3. Jessica Nivala, Teacher at Greenvale Park, FMLA leave of absence beginning 1/28/2027 and continuing through 6/11/2027.
 4. Michelle Sicker, Teacher at Greenvale Park, FMLA leave of absence beginning 11/16/2026 and continuing through 1/1/2027.
 5. Carla Hoppe, Early Childhood Teacher at the NCEC, FMLA leave of absence beginning 10/1/2026 and continuing through 12/22/2026.
- iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
1. Shari Bridley, Educational Assistant at the NCEC, resignation effective 10/14/2026.
 2. Annika Dornbusch, Assistant Girls Lacrosse Coach at the High School, resignation effective 9/21/2026.
 3. Jadzia Feimster, Custodian at Bridgewater, resignation effective 10/1/2026.
 4. Marcia Welch, KidVentures Site Assistant at Spring Creek, resignation effective 9/18/2026.
 5. Misty Cady, Child Nutrition Associate I at Spring Creek, resignation effective 9/24/2026.
- v. TRA Part-Time Teacher Program. The Board is requested to authorize participation for the following teachers to participate in the TRA Part-Time Teacher Program, whereby the teachers who qualify can personally purchase TRA service credit at no cost to the Northfield School District.
1. Rebecca Haar
- e. Overnight Field Trip Request. Northfield High School FFA Advisor T.J. Austin requested board approval to take ten FFA students to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IN October 21-24, 2026.

- f. Grant Application. Northfield High School Band Director Hayden Wahlstrom requested school board approval to apply for a grant to support a five-day residency with the Copper Street Brass Band, including performance, masterclass, lessons, and collaboration with band students in grades 6-12 for \$35,000 from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

7. Items for Individual Action

- a. Proposed 2026 Payable 2027 Preliminary Property Tax Levy. On a motion by Miller, seconded by Goerwitz, the board unanimously approved to certify to county auditors the 2026 Payable 2027 Preliminary Levy Limitation and Certification at the maximum authority. Director of Finance Mertensdorf reviewed the levy certification timelines and analysis of the preliminary levy. The amount of the preliminary levy for 2026 was \$29,843,580.31 and represented an 8.65% increase over last year. This represents the maximum levy amount as of this publication. The board, for many years, has certified the preliminary levy using the term “maximum” because the final levy certification can be lower than the preliminary certification but cannot be higher. Certifying at the “maximum” allows for flexibility should the calculation be higher than what is printed at the time of this board action. The preliminary property tax levy for 2027 is required to be certified to the district's home county auditor no later than September 30, 2026.
- b. Policy Committee Recommendations. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously approved the policy committee's recommended changes to policies 402, 423, 509, 515, 521, 524.2, 621, and 624.

8. Items for Information

- a. Minnesota Kids Rise. Board Member Amy Goerwitz provided information to the board about Minnesota Kids Rise, a statewide initiative launched by the Minnesota School Boards Association to build trust and pride in public schools.
- b. Construction Update No. 32. Director of Finance Mertensdorf provided an update on the NHS construction project.
- c. Retired Educators Luncheon. Board members are invited to attend the district's annual retired educators luncheon on Friday, October 30. The luncheon will be held at Ruth's on Stafford beginning at 11:30 a.m. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Kelly Spillman-Kramer no later than October 16.

9. Future Meetings

- a. Tuesday, October 13, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
*Note that Monday, October 12, 2026 is Indigenous Peoples' Day
- b. Monday, October 26, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- c. Monday, November 2, 2026, 5:15 p.m., Board Work Session, MSBA New Superintendent Workshop, Northfield DO Boardroom
- d. Monday, November 9, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Epstein, the board approved to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:37 p.m.



Maggie Epstein
School Board Clerk